



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last Wednesday was a full day for tourism in Arizona!

I attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown hotel. As the state's newest and largest hotel, the Sheraton was built in cooperation with the City of Phoenix to attract lucrative convention business and large scale events. This modernized hotel joins other key projects in the area – such as light rail and the expansion of the Phoenix Convention Center – to become the cornerstone of downtown Phoenix's development and renewal plan. The increase of visitors to the downtown area will create more jobs and infuse our state's economy with tax revenues.

Kudos to Mayor Phil Gordon and the Phoenix City Council, as well as Steve Moore and his staff at the Greater Phoenix CVB! Their efforts are shining examples of what can happen when a dedicated group of people come together to create an exciting new vision for the future. The impact of their hard work extends beyond city limits and generates a positive impression for the entire state of Arizona.

On the other side of town, I joined 600 plus industry leaders and employees at the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau's Annual Meeting. Under the CVB's new theme, "engage," keynote speaker Roger Dow, President of the Travel Industry Association (TIA), took center stage to talk about the benefits of travel. As a professional with years of hospitality experience, Dow urged the group to be "Brilliant at the Basics," and concentrate on excellent customer service in these challenging economic times. Rachel Sacco closed out the meeting with a preview of the CVB's [new advertising campaign](#), which will soon be released on a national scale.

Speaking of advertising, I want to remind you that October 28th kicks off this year's Arizona Tourism University (ATU) workshops with a session called "Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle." To register, please see the details below.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

We Need Your Landmark Events!

The Arizona Office of Tourism is seeking information on your special landmark events. If your community or local tourist attractions will reach a significant anniversary (i.e. 50 years, 75 years, centennials, etc.) in the next few years and there are planned special events to celebrate those landmarks, we want to know about it. For instance, The Gallery in the Sun will celebrate Ted DeGrazia's centennial year in 2009. Please submit your event information to Marjorie Magnusson, Public Relations Manager, at mmagnusson@azot.gov by **October 10, 2008**.

Fall for Arizona!

Fall has begun and tourists are looking for deals in Arizona. If you have a special "Fall" rate, or a special "Fall foliage" package or are offering a discount to visitors this Autumn, be sure to post them on the Travel Deals section of www.arizonaguide.com! To post your deal, go to www.azot.gov and click on Travel Deals. When posting your information, choose "Fall for Arizona" in the promotion category if your offer is applicable. If you have any questions, contact Marjorie Magnusson, Public Relations Manager, at 602-364-3695 or via e-mail at mmagnusson@azot.gov.

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Arizona Regional Map](#)
- [2007 North Central Arizona Regional Profile](#)
- [2007 Northern Arizona Regional Profile](#)
- [2007 Phoenix and Central Arizona Regional Profile](#)
- [2007 Tucson and Southern Arizona Regional Profile](#)
- [2007 West Coast Arizona Regional Profile](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

LVIC Resources Now On Line!

Below is a list of resources for designated Local Visitor Information Centers (LVICs) to assist them in their day-to-day operations.

Tools available:

- [LVIC Monthly Visitor Counts](#)
- [Arizona Regional Map](#)
- [Arizona Communities By Region](#)
- [ADA Parking Requirements](#)
- [Guest Register](#)
- [Brochure Distribution Lists](#)

If you have any questions regarding the information on these documents or if you would like to make suggestions on additional resources, please contact Brian Lang, Visitor Services Manager, at 602-364-3694 or via e-mail at blang@azot.gov.

SAVE the DATE: ATU's Interactive Marketing Workshop

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop **Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle**.

The "Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle" workshop is an informative and in-depth look at four of the most common interactive / online marketing elements: Search, E-mail, Social and Analytics. Building upon the previous Arizona Tourism University workshop, 'How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy,' this year's workshop will expand upon these 'Four Keys' to provide attendees with real-world examples, tips and tools that can be applied to their current interactive marketing campaigns.

Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or mdorn@azot.gov.

Four Key Pieces to the Interactive Marketing Puzzle will be held from **9:00 a.m. to Noon** in the following locations:

Tuesday, October 28 – [White Stallion Ranch](#)

Thursday, October 30 – [Lowell Observatory](#)

Neither of these dates work with your schedule? Then take advantage of our new online opportunity!

This year, AOT is proud to introduce ATU Online. We will be offering all of our workshops over the Internet in the form of a webinar. These condensed versions will offer the same great information as the workshops. The inaugural class is **Thursday, November 6**. Be sure to register for the class!

Rural Tourism Development Grant Program Guidelines Now Available!

The Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP) guidelines for FY09 are now available! The objective of this competitive grant program is to provide coordinated funding for tourism related infrastructure projects in rural communities throughout the state. The funding amount for FY09 is \$500,000. These funds assist rural economic development through tourism to strengthen the regional and local economies and expand tourism in rural and Tribal communities throughout Arizona. The primary function of the infrastructure project must be tourism

development and the project must be designed to initiate economic growth and enhance future tourism development. Eligible entities include not-for-profits, government organizations and tribal government.

New for FY09! Projects that contain an Arizona centennial component will receive priority funding. A detailed description of the criteria will be included in the FY09 guidelines and projects must comply with these guidelines to be considered a centennial project.

The FY09 RTDGP Guidelines define centennial projects as:

- Projects that include restoration of historic properties appropriate for use in the observance of the Arizona Centennial.
- Projects that provide a sense of unity and pride by accentuating the diverse nature of the State's tourist destinations.

Applications are available on AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov under the Grants section. Applications must be received by AOT no later than 5 p.m. **Wednesday, October 15, 2008.**

If you have any questions, please contact Glenn Schlottman, Tourism Education and Development Manager at 602-364-3727 or via e-mail at gschlottman@azot.gov. For information on the Arizona Centennial please contact Karen Churchard at 602-364-4158 or via e-mail at kchurchard@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Hosts Media Marketplace in New York

The Arizona Office of Tourism recently had the pleasure of hosting the New York Media Marketplace in Manhattan. This bi-annual event gave nearly two dozen tourism and hospitality partners from around the state the opportunity to share their latest developments and innovative story angles with key members of the New York travel media. Nearly 90 journalists attended the event representing such media outlets as *National Geographic Adventure*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Fodor's Travel*, and *Modern Bride.Budget Travel*. For more information, contact Erica Rich, Media Relations Manager at 602-364-3698 or via e-mail at erich@azot.gov.

Industry News

Rural and Regional Excellence, Main Street Award Winners Announced

Winners for the 2008 Excellence and Main Street Awards were announced last week at the 34th Annual Governor's Rural and Regional Development Conference. The event took place in Cave Creek-Carefree. The Excellence Awards honor partnerships, organizations, associations, service clubs, and companies that have created and implemented community and economic development strategies for regions in the past year. The Main Street Awards recognize outstanding projects, activities and individuals in Arizona's designated Main Street communities. For a complete list of the winners, visit www.azcommerce.com.

CBP Launches Interactive WHTI Travel Widget

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced last week a traveler-centric desktop widget as part of the integrated "Let's Get You Home" advertising and outreach campaign. As the traveler's departure date approaches, the automated widget provides a trip countdown timer and

weather at the traveler's destination and reminds the user to obtain appropriate travel documents, as required under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). U.S. and Canadian citizens entering the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda or the Caribbean must present a passport or other WHTI-compliant document beginning June 1, 2009.

The widget is designed so that anyone making travel plans on the Internet can take advantage of the trip countdown and weather functions. The widget is available to download from www.GetYouHome.gov.

Americans will Travel Lean and Green Next Year

TripAdvisor says its annual travel trends survey of more than 3,000 U.S. travelers finds that travelers appear to be going lean and green by visiting national parks, hiking and engaging in adventure activities. A greater number of Americans said they will be environmentally conscious in their travel decisions in 2009, and more plan to visit eco-friendly hotels in the coming year. TripAdvisor also unveiled its TravelCast list of emerging hot spots for 2009, and atop the list is Budoni, in Sardinia, Italy. The top emerging hot spot in the U.S. is St. George, Utah. (www.TravelDailyNews.com, 10/2)

Affluent Not Skimping on Travel

America's wealthiest consumers, in the wake of turmoil in the real estate and banking industries, are curtailing their spending on luxury goods and services, according to new research released Thursday by American Express Publishing and Harrison Group. However, the findings showed, travel is not where the wealthy are cutting; in fact, spending on travel is trending up. Instead, the affluent are cutting or intend to cut outlays on jewelry, fashion, accessories and other personal items. Survey respondents represent the wealthiest 10 percent of American households. As they focus on their spending, the affluent seem less willing to give up luxury items when they benefit the family, researchers said, and that is where travel fits in. (www.TravelWeekly.com, 10/2)

Whole Travel Launches Rating System to set the Eco-Standard and Keep Eco-Friendly Hotels Honest

The "green" incarnation of travel, called ecotourism, mandates that travelers minimize their cultural, economic, and environmental impacts as much as possible to promote sustainability. But while there are thousands of hotels worldwide that promote themselves as "green," many of them are only partially fulfilling these requirements - they might not be wasting energy, but are paying locals at near-slave wages, or funneling money out of the local economy.

A new site, Whole Travel, is looking to keep these hotels honest while promoting the concept of sustainable travel. The site assigns each hotel with a score based on its environmental, cultural, and economic impacts, as well as its "customer interaction," or how well it teaches visitors about the issues that affect their destination. For more information, visit www.wholetravel.com. (Source: *TechCrunch.com*)

Travel Industry Lauds Travel Security Funding Bill

The National Business Travel Association and the Travel Industry Association on Wednesday praised the passage by Congress of a homeland security appropriations bill that will fund significant reforms to the visitor and entry system. The bill, which is expected to be signed by President Bush today, provides funding for government security initiatives including Global Entry and US-VISIT. The legislation authorizes \$10 million to enhance and expand Global Entry, the U.S. international trusted traveler program. The bill includes \$300 million to fund the US-VISIT program and \$8.75 million to hire 173 more Customs and Border Protection officers to

improve security and speed passenger processing at international airports. The measure also would pay for additional staff to manage expansion of the Visa Waiver Program. (*Special to TA*)